



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE
Milwaukee County
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Milwaukee County Chosen for White House Data Driven Justice Initiative

MILWAUKEE – The White House today announced the launch of President Barack Obama’s Data Driven Justice Initiative, naming Milwaukee County, under County Executive Chris Abele’s leadership, one of 67 local governments chosen to participate in the program that aims to reduce incarceration through comprehensive, data-driven reforms.

Planning is under way for phase two of the MacArthur Foundation grant received by the County earlier this year to safely reduce the population in our jails, divert people with mental illness and/or substance abuse issues out of the system and into the appropriate treatment programs, and implement reforms that will reduce racial disparities in the criminal justice system.

Participation in the White House’s Data Driven Justice Initiative will support and expand Milwaukee County’s existing efforts in three key areas:

1. Creating or expanding real or near-real time local data exchanges that combine justice, health, or other system data, as appropriate and consistent with applicable legal and privacy protections, to enable identification of multiple system “super utilizers”;
2. Diverting this population, as well as people who may be committing low level crimes primarily due to mental illness, from the criminal justice system prior to arrest by use of our Early Interventions protocol, and linking them to care management or other community based services; and
3. Better identify individuals entering the criminal justice system who have significant problems related to trauma and mental illness.

“Public safety is of critical importance in our communities, and so is working smarter to implement meaningful, accountable, data-driven reforms to our community justice system,” Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele said Thursday. “Over the past several years, Milwaukee County, working with the Community Justice Council, has been undertaking an exceptional level of innovation and evidence-based practices to eliminate racial disparities in the justice system. By joining the White House’s initiative we’ll have even more opportunity to leverage these efforts into measurable results.”

"The Data-Driven Justice communities are leading by example by committing to adopt these proven strategies that reduce unnecessary arrests and incarceration. These approaches provide much needed stability to individuals and families, and make our communities stronger while saving taxpayer dollars," said DJ Patil, U.S. Chief Data Scientist.

"Efforts to divert low-level offenders out of the system, connect people with mental illness to the appropriate supportive resources, and allow the justice system to focus more effort prosecuting dangerous criminals are already underway, but Milwaukee County stands to benefit greatly by our participation in this initiative," said Chief Judge Maxine White. "These strategies have reduced jail populations in several communities, and helped stabilize families and communities that have experienced trauma."

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